

The Old Paths

Volume 19, Issue 16

June 17, 2012

“At Your Word I Will ...”

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Luke 5:1-11 records the miracle of the great catch of fish by Peter in the lake Gennesaret, or Galilee. This account begins with Christ preaching to the people. He did this by getting into Peter's boat (v. 3) and teaching the people from the boat, while they were gathered at the shore.

When Christ finished speaking, He commanded Peter to launch out “for a catch” (v. 4). Peter's response was: “Master, we toiled all night, and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets” (v. 5).

The words Peter spoke on this occasion meant something. The word “master” generally denotes a teacher (Ex: Matt. 19:16, 23:8). In this case, “master” “denotes a chief, a commander, overseer, It is used by the disciples in addressing the Lord, in recognition of his authority rather than His instruction” (Vine's *Amp.*, p. 506). J.W. McGarvey said “master” “indicates a superior” (Four-Fold Gospel, p. 164). Peter didn't need a lesson in fishing. He knew how to fish, where to fish, when to fish, etc. He needed to recognize the One in authority, and he did!

The miracle performed on this occasion was more than simply catching fish. The miracle is also seen in the MANNER in which the fish were caught. The time for the type of fishing Peter, James,

and John did was at night (v. 5a). The place for this type of fishing was near the shore, in the shallow water. Thus, we see that Jesus tells Peter to go to the wrong part of the lake at the wrong time of the day to catch fish!

Christ's command to go during the day into the deep part of the lake was foreign to what Peter had been doing. But, in respect for Christ's authority, Peter did it. What was the result? “They enclosed a large number of fish, and their nets were braking. They signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came, and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink he was astonished ... at the catch of fish they had taken” (Lk. 5:6-9).

Why did Peter catch such a large amount of fish? It was because after Christ told him to go, Peter was obedient. He said, “At your word I will...” What does this event teach us?

The Things We Do Must Be Done In Accordance With God's Word.

Peter said, “At your word...”. Christ's word was contrary to many things Peter and these men knew about fishing. Nevertheless, because Christ said it, Peter did it! Christ's command to go into the deep for fish was...

1. Contrary to Tradition: Peter could have disobeyed the Lord and justified it by saying, “We have

always gone at night, in the shallow water to catch fish.”

2. Contrary to Parents' Teaching: We understand that at this time, the sons followed in the trade of their fathers. Therefore, Peter's father would have taught him to get fish in the shallow water at night if he was to make a living. Peter might have said, “My dad and granddad did not do it this way.”

3. Contrary to the actions of friends: “No one else” was doing what Peter was doing (Lk. 5:7). Many times, people will feel justified in their lifestyle by noting the number of people who either are or are not doing what they are doing. Remember II Corinthians 10:12!

4. Contrary to Financial sense: “Fishing was a prosperous trade on the lake of Galilee” (Four-Fold Gospel, p. 162). Peter's way was proven to be successful, but what the Lord told Peter to do was the opposite of what those folks found to be successful. So, would Peter go against “common sense” to do what the Lord said?

Peter went against all these things and obeyed the Lord. In so doing, he was blessed with fish that day. As he continued to obey the Lord, Peter was blessed in many other ways, both physical and spiritual. Our response needs to be the same. If Christ said it, we do it!! Even if this means...

1. Contradicting Tradition: The Jews in the New Testament had to come to grips with this, and so do we! Simply doing the same thing consistently for a long time does not make it right. Only what is revealed in Scripture is right!

2. Contradicting our parents: Remember Matthew 10:34-37? We must love our parents, but not more than God! God must come first, and not any man!

3. Contradicting our friends: Our

friends are not going to judge us on the last day. Christ is (Jn. 5:22; Acts 17:31; Rom. 2:16)! Just like our parents, what our friends do or do not do does not determine if a thing is right or wrong.

4. Contradicting financial sense: Those who truly follow the gospel do not do so for the money or physical gain (I Tim. 6:10; Matt. 6:19-21). We do it for a higher and nobler purpose, the salvation of our souls (Matt. 16:26)!.

Our Obedience To Christ Must Be Voluntary.

The last part of Peter's response was: "*I will...*" Again, understand that Peter recognized Christ the Master was speaking to him! He was present at the wedding when Mary told the servants, "*Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it*" (Jn. 2:5). He understood also that he needed to willingly obey the Lord.

In like manner, our obedience to the Lord is voluntary, not compulsory, or mandatory! Jesus said, "*If you love me, you will keep my commandments*" (Jn. 14:15). Friends, how much do we love Christ? In like manner, Matthew 11:28-30 is called "The Great Invitation" for a reason. Christ offered an invitation, NOT an ultimatum!! God wants His people to worship and obey Him because they want to, not because they are forced!

God has always allowed men the choice as to whether or not they would obey Him. This truth is seen in Genesis 2:15-17, Exodus 16:4, Deuteronomy 6:10-15, 27:11-13, Judges 2:15-19, and into the New Testament where Paul makes it plain that God wants a "*willing mind*" (II Cor. 8:12, 9:7).

Yet, if we are following the

Lord, obeying Him merely because of...

1. **Tradition** -- We've always gone here.

2. **Our Parents** -- They brought me up "under this roof"

3. **Our Friends** -- They are going here.

4. **Money** -- Some belong to the church for the financial gains that can come from the associations in this place.

If these are our reasons for following the Lord, then we doing it for the wrong reasons and are in sin! We must follow the Lord with *faith* and *conviction*. Let us follow the Lord willingly because we love Him and wish to do what He has said (Jn. 14:15; Matt. 22:37-39). Let us be as Peter and say, "*Master ... at your word I will...*"!

"WHAT GOSPEL PREACHING CAN DO"

Preaching Divine Creation stirs the Evolutionist.

Preaching the one true church stirs the denominationalists.

Preaching against liquor stirs the drinker.

Preaching on modesty stirs the immodest.

Preaching on attendance stirs those unfaithful in attendance.

Preaching on pure speech stirs the gossip.

Preaching on dedication stirs the uncommitted.

Preaching on honesty stirs the cheat.

Preaching against sin stirs the guilty.

Preaching on Christ stirs those who love Him.

Preaching on Heaven stirs the hearts of those who want to go there.

Based on the above, let us ask two questions:

- 1) What kind of preaching are you hearing in the pulpit?
- 2) What kind of preaching are you DEMANDING in the pulpit?

II Timothy 4:2

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